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Keynote address: 'Forum on Global Cultural Management 2019',

Shanghai JiaoTong University 7-9th December 2019

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Title: 'Cultural Management: a historical dilemma'.

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Thank you to Professor Shilian Shan, and Professor Kanghua Li, of Shanghai JiaoTong University, and to Professor Justin O'Connor of the University of South Australia, and the UNESCO project team, for organising the foreign delegation.

This international conference opens with a question of semantics, if not a dilemma: are we discussing the 'management of culture', or 'cultural management', and are we understanding 'management' in established terms (as a person invested with authority performing a task-based rationalisation of specialist production through control and coordination)? The difference is both political as much as expressive of a view of 'culture'. If by 'culture' here do we mean 'organised' culture (from arts projects to institutions, and from the creative industries to other forms of social organisation that define or involve culture, such as community or religious groups), or do we mean something broader to do with identity, place, nature and the social order (in Raymond Williams's quasi anthropological sense, a 'particular way of life'? Williams, 1976: 87-93). This why, I suggest, that we need to think of management in a broader sense, in terms of a 'political ontology' of management.

I begin with 2 points:

(i): Scholarly research on culture and creativity has been understood largely through an attention to *producers and products* (such as artists and works of art) and the design, meaning and historical significance of the experience of such. But, as a general observation, this scholarly attention has not included their management and organisation; (ii) this delivers a paradox: the arts, culture and even creative industries are often lagging behind the advances in the strategic modelling and uses of management and organisation we find in industry (take Pixar, Google or Facebook's management). In other words, the models of management we find in the arts, culture and creative industries are all too often extrapolated from (past) public bureaucracy, business enterprise or the corporate world (and consequently subject to their assumptions and embedded values).

I became aware of this in the early 2000s when I was managing the journal

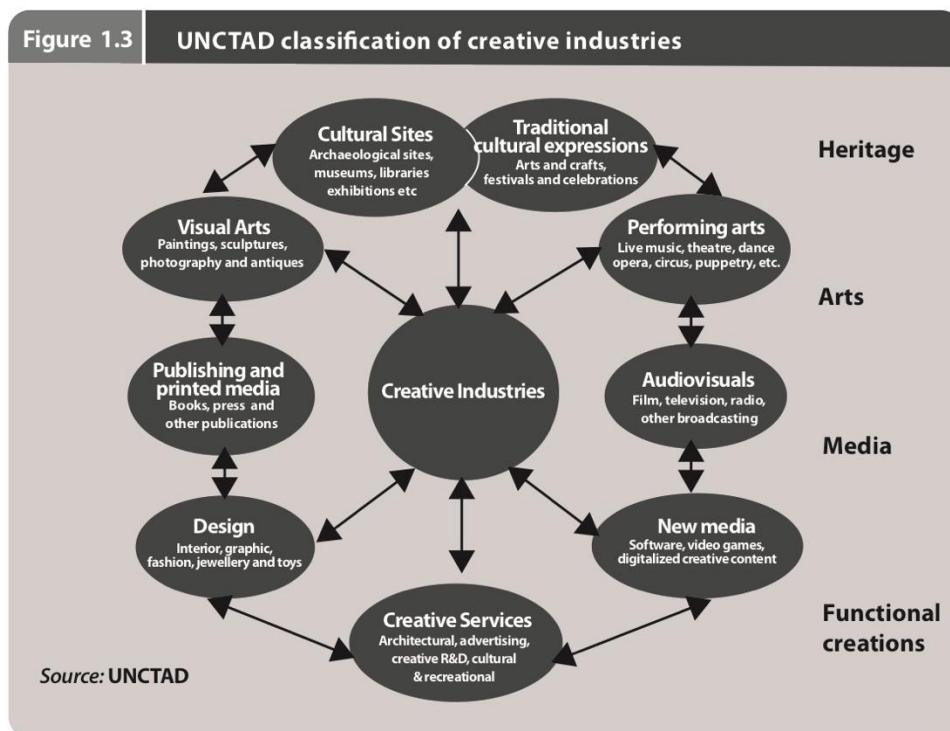
Aesthesis: the international journal of art and aesthetics in management and organisational life – and here I quote some apposite texts that emerged within the orbit of the journal: (i): Jonas Ridderstråle and Kjell Nordström celebrated the era of what they called ‘funky business’ and ‘Karaoke capitalism’: service-era capitalism has evolved in a less uniform and all-controlling way than industrial capitalism, and the resulting instability allows ‘the manager’ to break out of a tradition imposed role and engage in creativity to become ‘business leaders’ (Ridderstråle and Nordström, 2000, 2004). (ii): Rob Austin and Lee Devin’s *Artful Making* — managers are, in fact, now learning from artists (Austin and Devin, 2003); (ii): Pierre Guillet de Monthoux’s *The Art Firm* found concealed within the history of the fine arts (from Wagner to Richard Wilson) models of management and organisation that presented alternatives or ‘responses’ to current dilemmas (Guillet de Monthoux, 2004).

As far as I know, the two most recent books on cultural management published are King and Schramme’s *Cultural Governance in a Global Context* (published in the last year: King and Schramme, 2019), and Durrer and Henze’s *Cultural Management* (just published: Durrer and Henze, 2020). They both underline how Cultural Management is struggling to advance its self-understanding beyond established models of management, which historically have been the following: (i) manager as public administration (public bureaucracy); (ii) manager as specialist production coordinator (curating, archiving, conservation, choreographer, etc., etc.); (iii) the corporate manager (strategic organisation executive). And (iv) the project manager: small scale, highly commercial, casualised, cultural and creative organisations and businesses work on a wide range of project management models.

My introductory point is that while scholars in management and organisation studies have been turning to ‘culture’ in order to address the need for innovation or indeed inherent dilemmas of industry and corporate models, the cultural sphere has largely turned away from culture’s own condition of creativity and innovation, and reached for ready-made models from outside (Cf. Parker’s 2002 book, *Against Management: organization in the age of managerialism*; Bilton, 2007; Clegg and Kornberger, 2006; Dobson, 1999; Myerson and Ross, 2003; Pine and Gilmore, 1999). *Our research problem is thus twofold*: Our principle question is, how do we formulate a concept of management specific to culture? A condition of any response to this question is a theoretical comprehension of why ‘management’ in culture and creative industries is

not reducible to the planned, task-based coordination of standardised models of management (it's not just the management of organisations of people and production). It is a management that intersects the formation of identities, places, traditions, symbolic meanings, value and capital of diverse kinds.

The now famous UNCTAD diagram of 'creative industries' (actually, of the cultural field as an integrated 'sector' of the economy: represented below, and also used by UNESCO), reveals the complexity and hybridity of 'culture'. The diagram played an important role in incorporating the arts and cultural production generally into an 'economy' model, which is read as a map of production — of creative products and productive organisations. To 'read' it in terms of 'management', however, necessitates an understand of the dynamics of the "arrows", and the missing context — the environment of policy, social and economic development (indeed, as all these industries are in fact specific organisations and businesses, located in specific places with particular people)].



Source: UNCTAD: 'Classification of Creative Industries': *Creative Economy Report 2010*, p.8 (permissions obtained).

The first research project I conducted on new emerging forms of management in the cultural field took the form of a case study of an artist-run gallery called 'Eastside

Projects' in the UK city of Birmingham. Their management was collective, characterised by co-working, and aimed principally to create and defend a public space for art (and by implication the growing publics for art in the city). Central to this were a range of management activities in the following areas (all recognised skills for contemporary managers, of course, but not as central to management itself — to 'managing'):

- Networking
- Activism
- Lobbying
- Negotiating
- Design and visual communication
- Publications, research, events and public debate

In dialogue with Eastside Projects, I developed a spatial theory of management – it was 'spatial' in the sense that management was not defined as a position of authorisation in employing forms of control and coordination of tasks, but as a form of *agency* intersecting with the force of change *within* specific spheres of labour (cf. the concept of 'organisational fields': DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). The conception of management that emerged was involved, for example, in identity and representation (it defended and advocated for culture — against the forces, largely political or governmental forces, that did not recognise the claims, historical depth, creative capabilities and power of transformation that culture delivers). For these artist-managers, their experience principally involved securing recognition, claiming a space and resources for art, and producing forms of art and artistic activity that was able to generate a committed and significant 'public', which in turn, the project looked to for strategic ways forward. In terms of my diagram, management was defined as working in a spatial triangulation of *authority*, *legitimacy* and *value* production. Within this triangulation, authority (traditionally, power), legitimacy (traditionally, endemic to a position in a hierarchy), and value (of labour, the services or products of labour, the monetary, profit or surplus, and so on) presented two trajectories (stated here as two options, one typical of traditional management, the other less so).

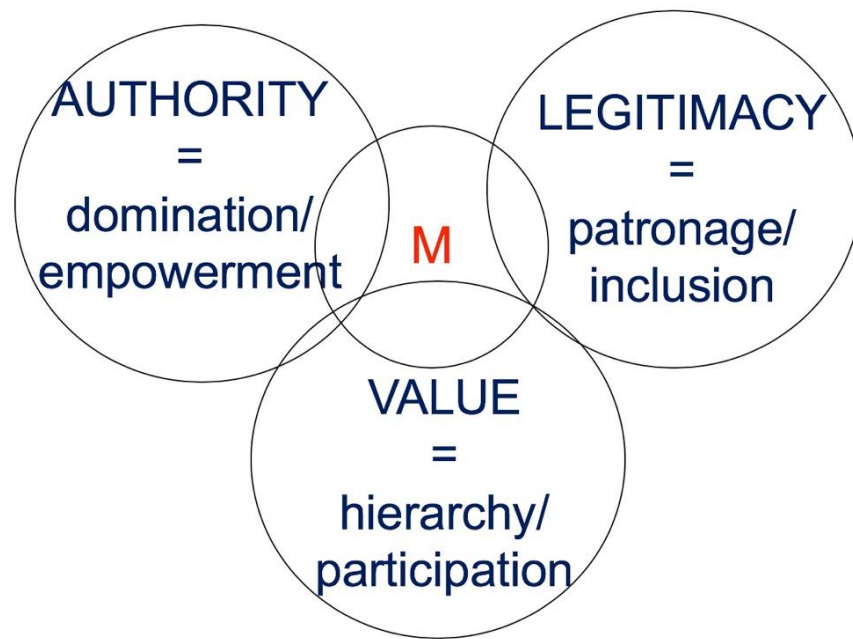


Figure 1: *The Nexus of Management* © the author

Indeed, Gordon Pearson in his 2009 book *The Rise and Fall of Management* (Pearson, 2009) explains how management as we typically know it emerged with mechanical and empirically-grounded forms of control and coordination, a pre-planned product or service, and a homogenous workforce. In the age of globalisation, however, management has become subject to flux, market complexity, permeated with communications, rights, the social environment, and forms of globalisation that have integrated the manager with the labour and process of production at many levels. Indeed, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello in *The New Spirit of Capitalism Management* (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2006) explains this transmutation: management as the imposition of social control and authority has mutated into more subtle articulations of human subjectivity (desire, communication, meaning, and broader forms of capital). Theoretically speaking, human subjectivity itself has become prime material for the dominant means of capitalist production (see new trends in corporate management of space, the workforce and labour processes: Bahamón, Cañizares, Corcuera, 2009; Dobson, 1999; Clegg and Kornberger, 2006).

Globally, this shift is registered in the new conditions for contemporary cultural production we are all familiar with: the 'new' cultural management is not just

organisation or production-driven, it involves the following innovations:

- (i) Multi-site, mobile or pop-up organisations; public engagement; online audiences.
- (ii) Brand Communications, retail and cultural marketing.
- (iii) Curating and curatorial methodologies (paradigmatic for managing the politics of representation and display).
- (iv) Event-driven programming and the festivalisation of its location

And we must add to this the management of 'third spaces' (from networks, incubators, innovation hubs, labs, research portals, and other 'platforms'). The production of the new space *itself* is a form of creative labour, and has generated new modes of management. Indeed, in the 'spatial practice' framework of Henri Lefebvre, it generates perceptual (representations), conceptual (design and planning) and 'lived' engagement with the social 'everyday' (Lefebvre 1991: 33).

To return to my opening assertion: the 'dilemma' with all of these exciting developments, I would argue (from the title of this paper), is that they are all either (a) derivative of responses to the evolution of the market (brand, firms, corporations, and so on), or (b) derivative of innovations in government (policy and state management of civil society). And moreover, they have for the most part, been thrust upon the cultural sector and not chosen as to their effectiveness. The dilemma articulated as a research question can be simply put: what is management *specific* to culture — a management framework that itself is formed in and through the cultural, the complex of policy theories we call 'cultural and creative industries'? The assumption underpinning (and motivating) this question, is the 'autonomy' of culture combined with an informed scholarly axiom that the value of culture exceeds other (often 'instrumental' forms of value)?

This, I maintain, requires a political ontology of management: a theoretical understanding of the conditions of management within a cultural realm that is replete with imposed models of management from both public and corporate life. This takes us to the 2005 UN *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Expressions* — one of the principle reference points for the organisation of this conference. This international treatise is rightfully referred to as a statement of global cultural policy and not a framework for cultural management; the Convention does not refer to, least of all define, cultural management. Yet, the Convention's cultural-legal framework of objectives and principles requires a cultural management,

evidently so, and does so not simply in the sense that cultural policies need to be implemented, but these policies are of a complexion whereby they need to be implemented in a 'cultural' way. I will unpack this assertion by way of concluding with three points, each of which I hope inform the collaborative research agenda following from this conference. The points adumbrate an ontology of cultural management — meta-theoretical reference points for beginning to define a global cultural management in specific terms (i.e. without 'generalising' on the commonalities of all its particular iterations — as arts management, as design management, as management of a theatre, and so on). For a framework of cultural management emerging from the terms of the Convention could not be defined in terms of a task-based rationalisation of specialist production through control and coordination, as the Convention is not that specific and does not appoint specific agents (even though it is speaking, obviously, to the legal signatories of member states); and yet the second and central section on the Convention's 'Objectives' arguably requires a specific and determined form of 'management' (in a longer iteration on ontology, I would proceed in the direction of Fleetwood, 2005).

1: The Convention opens by a range of 'references', followed by 'principles', both emphasising the interrelation of its terms and conditions within other UNESCO (and UN) declarations and treaties — notably, how the condition of 'diversity' interconnects culture with social cohesion, human rights, opportunities and equities, wellbeing and prosperity. By implication, the cultural management emerging from the Convention emerges from the existing historical discourse on culture and sustainable development, and must be conceived in terms of a 'policy agency' for culture, which may be a person (individual 'manager') but equally an organisation or collective of practitioners. The Convention sets forth three 'spaces' in which such agency is active in responding to the stated objectives (expressed more concretely in Section IV on Rights and Obligations): (i) the intercultural — the dialogue that articulates the condition of diversity; (ii) policy intervention — inserting the terms of the Convention into existing cultural policies (and all other policies that involve the fundamental reality of diversity); and (iii) a participatory effort of realising the aims of the Convention globally, which can only be define in terms of a cultural public sphere of international cooperation (anticipated by the UNESCO Convention of 1945, and the Declaration of Principles of International Cultural Co-operation of 1966).

2: This political agency for culture operates within — in Bourdieu’s terms, an interrelated ‘field of power’ (Schmitz, Witte, Gengnagel, 2017) — actively working towards an internationalised interaction between four registers of jurisdiction:

- A public (institutional) sector
- A civil society (associations; NGOs, charities, etc.):
- A private sector (enterprise; business; corporations):
- A cultural sector (referred to in the Convention simply as artists and cultural professionals)

While these four registers seem obvious, they cannot be assumed as a global reality, and even in ‘developing’ economies the relation between them is often exclusive, hostile or in need of mediation (at least for the sake of particular cultural objectives). In other terms, it actively works within this field of power for a ‘governance’ arrangement for culture — a cultural governance: that is, a management of diversity must take place within a nexus of engagement (a complex of strategic partnerships, collaboration, cooperation, activism, or, the kinds of arrangements that can traverse the boundaries of the above registers).

3: And lastly, where the practical dimension of cultural management is concerned, the Convention’s objectives sets out distinct areas of activity: these are not *tasks* so much as (in Amartya Sen’s terms) *capabilities*. To define management in terms of ‘capabilities’ entails a reflection on power inherent in the manager, and an inversion of that power to be benefit of the ‘managed’ (or, as in my diagram of Eastside Projects above, the domination inherent in concentrations of power are converted to ‘empowerment’; the patronage involved in the manager as recipient of devolved power and capital converted to ‘inclusion’; the manager as position in a hierarchy used for ‘participation’). The significance of Sen’s concept of ‘capabilities’ is that it defines agency in terms of social interrelations: human propensities and their facility for action is defined in terms of a generalised social good, not just individual self-fulfilment. A ‘capabilities approach’ (which, in Sen’s context, address a condition of poverty in relation to the need for development) defines agency in terms of an ability to function in certain ways that enable a fulfilment of values, defined by that person(s), and through which that person(s) aspires to a quality of life. The choosing which or what combinations of “functionings” one activates, is of course, the freedom to do so, and so a political (or at least public) dimension is intrinsic to Sen’s broader theory of economic development (Sen, 1985; 2005).

I will leave this proposition for further research, but to indicate what I mean — and to emphasise that the terms of the Convention are not, in fact, exclusively addressed to member states (or national governments) but presuppose multiple actors and a broader sense of agency — let's start with Convention Objective (a) “to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions”. While ‘protecting’ suggests juridical enforcement, the promotion demands advocacy, campaigning and cultural partisanship. It is clear that the national flagship cultural institutions and cultural agencies currently engaged in such are uncoordinated and lacking in a research capacity for their strategy-making.

Moving swiftly, and arguably, the following five Objectives — b., c., d., e. and f. — all involve ‘interculturalism’, which as a cultural policy (within cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations) is something yet to be fully worked out in cultural research. And I will conclude by a dual observation on “(f.) to reaffirm the importance of the link between culture and development for all countries”, which is a neglected dimension of the UK’s huge international development budget (notwithstanding the British Council), and that “(g) to give recognition to the distinctive nature of cultural activities, goods and services as vehicles of identity, values and meaning” is surely a call to arms for all cultural researchers. Why cultural research is so detached, self-interested, and absorbed in its own academic agendas is, of course, a political as much as an academic question. But I will finish on “(h) to reaffirm the sovereign rights of States to maintain, adopt and implement policies and measures that they deem appropriate for the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions on their territory”. While, on the face of it, this seems a reiteration of the primacy of nation state government in a UN intergovernmental context, it also provides the basis for accountability: are our governments making good this obligation? This Objective provides the basis of a challenge if they are not.

To summarise my theory: within the Convention, a political ontology of cultural management emerges as a project that needs to be activated in terms of policy agency, defined within global governance, and develop capabilities in ways that express existing rights and equities, with a common purpose for sustainable development. The challenge for us is to make this empirically specific: that this, (a)

place-based, and engaged with our complex social and natural environments, and (b) interculturally engaged (across cultural boundaries, within countries, and across the global economy). My (revised) diagram below, elaborates my theory, and will be used for further discussion.

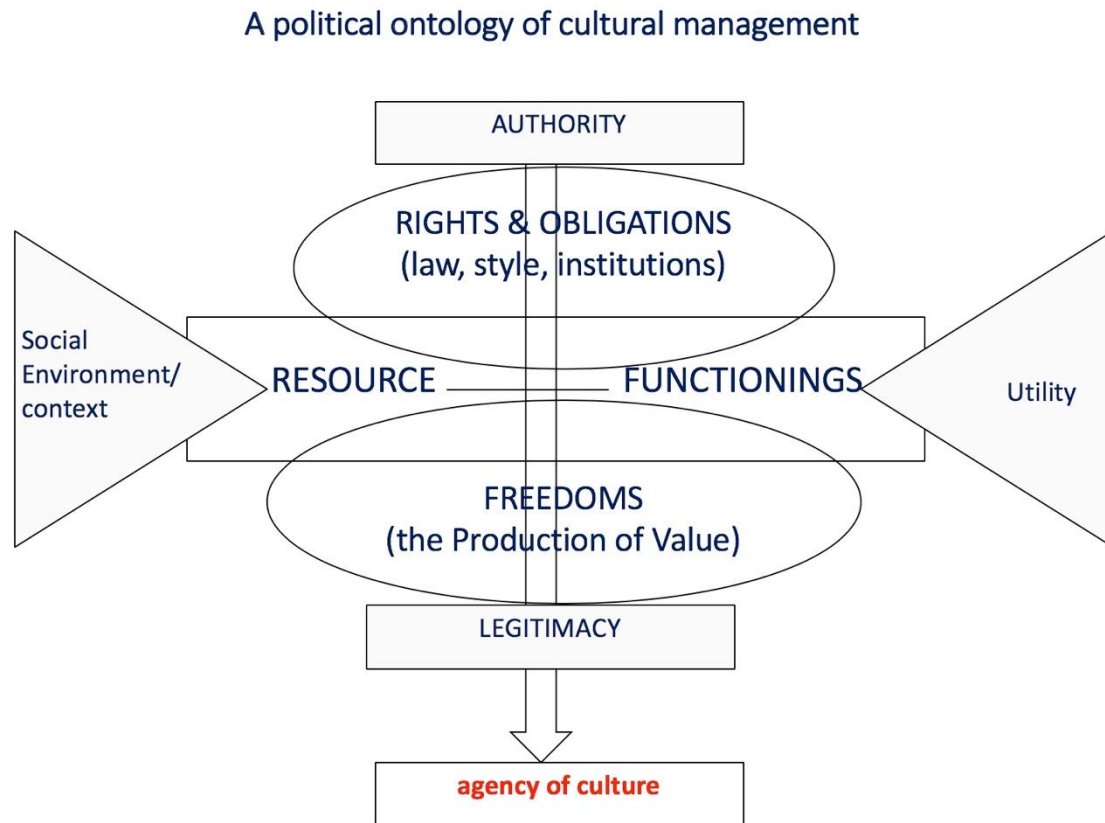


Figure 2: A political Ontology of Cultural Management © the author

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